DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 435 415 JC 990 660

TITLE	Arizona Learning Systems Business Plan.
INSTITUTION	Arizona State Board of Directors for Community Colleges, Phoenix.
PUB DATE	1999-00-00
NOTE	8p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Community Colleges; *Computer Assisted Instruction; Computer Uses in Education; Educational Innovation; *Educational Technology; Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; *Instructional Development; *Instructional Innovation; *Partnerships in Education; Program Implementation; Statewide Planning
IDENTIFIERS	*Arizona

ABSTRACT

This paper describes Arizona Learning Systems (ALS), an alliance of Arizona community colleges developed in response to a state legislative appropriation for technology assisted learning. The appointed task force was to address the needed telecommunications connectivity between community college districts, and among community college districts, the universities, and K-12. The ALS Business Plan focuses on the use of Interactive Instructional Television (IITV) as an instructional method. Over the next few years, ALS expects other modes of learning to become available, and the Business Plan includes funds for content development in these other modes of instruction. ALS proposes to extend the benefits of distance learning statewide and create market-based incentives for the development of entirely new instructional content. It also should encourage the development of computer-based instruction (CBI) and Internet courses. The ALS plan envisions developing two "markets": a telecommunications network and instructional content. The system would ultimately have a four- to five-person staff, and the plan includes programs for faculty development, assessment of instructional material effectiveness, and development of content otherwise thought uneconomic by districts. Included in this article is a table of ALS's financial plan and a chart of the number of annual headcount students served through ALS courses. (VWC)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

D. Puyear

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED 435 415

Arizona Learning Systems Business Plan

Arizona Learning Systems (ALS) is an alliance of Arizona community colleges, developed in response to a State of Arizona legislative appropriation for Technology Assisted Learning. The appropriation charges the State Board of Directors for Community Colleges in Arizona to "...design a statewide plan for interconnecting and consolidating community college, university and K12 telecommunication video systems, voice and data and to tie individual community college districts' electronic delivery systems together. The statewide network plan and resource allocation recommendation must be presented to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee for review."

The appointed Task Force was to address the needed telecommunications connectivity between community college districts, and community college districts and the Universities, and K- 12. As interpreted by the A.LS Task Force, the State Board charged the Task Force to extend learning opportunities throughout the state; to broaden the curriculum, especially in presently underserved areas; and to take advantage of the effectiveness and efficiencies of instructional technology to improve teaching and learning in Arizona. In addition, in planning its programs and its infrastructure, ALS is making a major commitment to support economic development, especially in small towns and cities and rural areas of Arizona.

To achieve these broad objectives, the ALS Task Force included members from the three Universities, and established communications with the Department of Education.

TC 990660

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Because Interactive Instructional Television (IITV) has been used effectively in Arizona for almost a decade and because of the concern about the cost of telecommunications systems needed to support growing IITV course offerings, the ALS Business Plan focuses on the use of Interactive Instructional Television (IITV) as an instructional method for the next few years. However, demand is increasing for additional technology assisted learning options - e.g., CD-Rom based, Internet delivered, video to home, etc - which allow the student increased freedom from the time and place constraints of the IITV classroom. At present, however, IITV courses are available that can be immediately distributed to other districts. This expanded distribution of existing courses meets many of the ALS objectives.

Over the next few years, ALS expects other modes of learning to become available. The Business Plan includes funds for content development in these other modes of instruction. Because of the uncertain availability of course content and courses in these instructional modes, the Business Plan does not project increased enrollments within the next three years for these instructional methods. Current pilot project efforts suggests a more optimistic implementation schedule is feasible, and significant additional enrollment may be achieved in the future.

Northern Arizona University has successfully used IITV to offer upper division and graduate courses throughout the state. ALS proposes to build on this experience to extend the benefits of distance learning throughout the state, focusing particularly on delivering

courses to students who do not now have access to courses and training important to employment in the changing Arizona economy. In addition, several rural community colleges have extensive experience with IITV delivery within their districts: Yavapai, Northland Pioneer, Central Arizona, and Cochise Community Colleges. Arizona Western and Mohave have jointly delivered a successful weekend college via IITV.

Rio Salado College has introduced Internet courses and degrees; other Arizona community colleges have Internet courses under development or being introduced. The Business Plan provides telecommunications to distribute these courses, but does not include these enrollments or the transfer of payments in the projected financial plan since course content development and its availability cannot be reasonably projected.

In addition to making the curriculum resources of the better-served districts available throughout the state, ALS is also intended to create market-based incentives for the development of entirely new instructional content. As new instructional content becomes available, other forms of instructional delivery--Internet courses, computer-based instruction using both Internet and CD-ROMS, supplemented video and audio courses-will become available. These multimedia courses require substantial investment and time to develop, and may not initially be available in significant numbers.

Computer-based instruction (CBI) and Internet courses permit a student to learn at a time and rate convenient to the student. Because many students have work and other

responsibilities, it is not possible to attend scheduled classes, even scheduled IITV classes. ALS encourages the development of this type of courses.

ALS envisions developing two "markets." One is a telecommunications network permitting any community college district to receive instructional materials from any other community college district. Fees paid by the receiving districts for ALS-distributed courses include a fee for operating the network. The current Business Plan projects break-even in three years (1999-2000) for a three unit course. At that time, the ALS network would be serving 9,000 students with 22,500 IITV course enrollments. The State would have invested $2,456,000 in implementation and development of the telecommunications infrastructure and $300,000 for the development of course content. Districts receiving IITV courses will have paid $4,080,000 to other districts for course content and $2,346,000 to A.LS for telecommunications and other services.

The second "market" is instructional content. To finance content development, the plans project that a district enrolling a student in an ALS three-unit course will pay from $120 to $200 per enrolled student to the district providing the content. Higher fees may be charged for courses that are exceptionally expensive to develop or are developed for the use by a small number of students. These fees take the form of transfer payments from receiving districts to originating districts. This is expected to fund part of the content development.

For purposes of this plan, the combination of the ALS telecommunications "distribution" fee $69 per course and the fee for instructional content would total from $189 to $269. This compares to a current average cost of instruction using traditional methods of $269 for all colleges, and $258 for all except Maricopa Community College District colleges. The amounts of these fees were selected to provide incentives to originating districts to develop course content, and to receiving districts to become "Consumers" of entire, new content made available at the roughly the current average cost of instruction.

The student's "home district" would be responsible for student advising and counseling, for providing academic support and facilities, and for administration. Academic records and degrees would also be the responsibility of the "home district." These services improve student performance and increase retention and completion.

As described in the Business Plan, ALS would ultimately have a four-to five-person staff. This staff would be responsible for monitoring the operation of the telecommunications network, scheduling the delivery of instructional content, transferring student data between districts, and maintaining the knowledge base in a form that would make it available to all districts for "recycling" learning components of developed courseware. Also, the Business Plan includes programs for faculty development, for assessing the effectiveness of distributed instructional materials, and for development of content that districts may not otherwise find economic.

The financial plan for Arizona Learning Systems is summarized in Table 1. This plan includes transfer payments from one district to another for content, the anticipated state funding, and the costs for telecommunications, the development of ALS infrastructure-primarily administrative software, and ALS operations.

Figure 1 shows the number of annual headcount students served through ALS courses. If Internet and computer-based instruction courses become available, the enrollments will increase above those shown.

	Budget Year			
	1996-97	**1997-98**	**1998-99**	**1999-2000**
Income				
From Districts	47,250	708,750	1,417,500	4,252,500
To Other Districts	30,000	450,000	900,000	2,700,000
Net to ALS	17,250	258,750	517,500	1,552,500
State Funding	1,000,000	1,056,000	700,000	0
To Districts	550,000	50,000	30,000	0
Net to ALS	450,000	1,006,000	670,000	0
Other Funding	0	30,000	50,000	150,000
Total	**467,250**	**1,294,750**	**1,237,500**	**1,702,500**
Expenditures				
Telecommunications	44,200	490,500	686,925	1,068,896
ALS Infrastructure	42,000	199,800	35,280	35,280
ALS Operations	360,520	614,284	539,012	542,782
Unallocated	3,280	10,000	10,000	15,000
Total	**450,000**	**1,314,584**	**1,271,217**	**1,661,958**
Change to Fund Balance	17,250	(19,834)	(33,717)	40,542
Fund Balance	17,250	(2,584)	(36,301)	4,241

TABLE 1 - Summary of the Arizona Learning Systems Business Plan

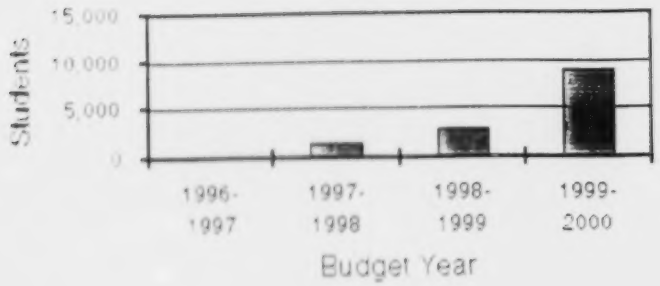

Figure 1 - Students Served, Projected, Arizona Learning Systems